

12/26/06

Approved August 21, 2006

MINUTES

State Board of Guide Dogs for the Blind  
BOARD MEETING  
April 6, 2006  
Department of Rehabilitation  
Mukelumne Room  
2000 Evergreen Street  
Sacramento, CA 95815  
(916) 263-8751

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Allan Brenner, President  
Thomas B. Scott, Vice President  
Judith Karau, Board Member  
Alice Hackney, Dept. of Rehab. Designee

BOARD STAFF PRESENT

Jane Brackman, Executive Officer  
Albert Balingit, Staff Legal Counsel

DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF EXTERNAL  
AFFAIRS  
Nanette Madsen

GUIDE DOGS OF AMERICA [GDA]

Bob Wendler  
Wendy Roof

GUIDE DOGS OF THE DESERT  
INTERNATIONAL [GDDI]

Brian Van Dusen  
Jim Klocek  
Ann Mercer  
Jill Browning

GUIDE DOGS FOR THE BLIND [GDB]

Aerial Gilbert  
Diana Keck  
Ken Stupi  
Paul Keasberry

GUESTS

Lynn Harris

President Brenner called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. and welcomed all attendees. Roll was called and four members present constituted a quorum for doing business.

Jane Brackman read the minutes of the December 8, 2005 meeting and the minutes of the teleconference February 15, 2006 meeting. Corrections were made respectively. Tom Scott moved and Alice Hackney seconded that both sets of minutes be adopted as amended.

REGULATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

Jeff Neidich being absent, Jane Brackman presented the report and read the response letter from GDA President Jay Bormann (attached).

After hearing from GDA representative Bob Wendler, GDDI Board President Brian Van Dusen, and GDB Chief Financial Officer Ken Stupi, the conversation turned to the adversarial attitude that permeates discussion between the schools and the Board whenever regulation issues are on the table. Allan Brenner remarked that the schools should take a leadership role in hammering out ideal minimum standards rather than respond negatively to standards proposed by the Board that they believe are too restrictive. In most DCA agencies, the licensees, who are the experts, participate in setting minimum standards. Opening up discussion about minimum standards is an opportunity for licensees to tell the Board what they want.

In relation to the discussion and the question of what procedure is already in place were a school to fail to meet minimum standards, Jane Brackman read the minutes from the February 22, 1991 Guide Dog Board meeting wherein the same subject being discussed today, was on the agenda then: What are the minimum standards a school must meet to maintain a license?

Staff counsel Albert Balingit will review the inspection procedure adopted on February 22, 1991, and make a report at the next board meeting.

Schools Standards Committee member Tom Scott suggested that before the next meeting, a representative from the school meet face to face with the committee to hammer out minimum standards requirement. At the next meeting the standards should be presented by a consensus of the licensees and the Board so a vote can be taken.

#### GUIDE DOG DAY

Jane Brackman suggested a Guide Dog Day Committee be established. Alice Hackney accepted the chair position. Other volunteers: Ariel Gilbert from GDB; Gerda Hook from GDDI; Andi Krusoe from GDA; and former Board member Karen Pearson. More Guide Dog User representatives are being sought. The meetings will be conducted by email and teleconference and Alice Hackney will report to the Board at the next meeting.

Allan Brenner cited correspondence from Canine Companions for Independence Executive Director Corey Hudson, as evidence that consideration be given to inviting other service dogs to participate, but this must be decided by the guide dog handlers of California and the schools.

#### ELECTION AND TERM LIMITS

Referring to text from the last meeting wherein the Board expressed interest in setting two, two year term limits for officers, Albert Balingit explained that nothing in Statute 7203 allows the board to set term limits. An officer can serve indefinitely until a successor is elected. Although term limits can not be the subject of a formal board action, they should be a working rule remarked Judy Karau. Continuity is established when there is an informal understanding that for instance, the VP becomes the President.

#### ANNUAL CALENDAR

Historically, meetings and testing have been conducted at the same time and apprentices travel to meeting locations to take the practical.

Incurring considerable expenses for transportation and lodging of their instructors traveling to the various testing locations, and taking into account that their apprentices are frequently the only ones taking the practical exam, Guide Dogs for the Blind CFO Ken Stupi requested that the test locations for their apprentices be in the Bay Area. Furthermore, because the Board can conceivably and legally do testing by committee and determine the location that makes the most logistical and financial sense for the Schools and the Board, it was suggested that the Board consider setting up a centralized testing schedule, like other Boards do, wherein the dates are set up a year or two in advance, and the apprentices sign up when they are ready to test.

There are no rules as to when meetings are held, only that the Board must meet once a year. There was discussion by the Board about how many meetings are appropriate, which months they should be scheduled, whether or not the Board should meet by teleconference, how the testing dates relate to the meeting calendar, and whether or not the testing should continue to take place at meetings.

Allan Brenner, Tom Scott and Jane Brackman volunteered to serve on a Testing Committee to give consideration to testing the two apprentices who are currently waiting to take their practical exams before the next meeting.

Historically, the Board meets the second or third week in September in northern California in conjunction with the annual inspection of Guide Dogs for the Blind. The Executive Officer was instructed to identify a date for the September meeting.

#### EO REPORT

1. School Inspection: Executive Officer Jane Brackman and former Executive Officer Harry Thomas visited Guide Dogs of the Desert International on Friday, March 17, 2006, as part of the annual school inspection. Board President Brian Van Dusen, Board Vice President Jim Klocek, Director of Operations Kim Laidlaw and Resource Development Director of Major Events Gerda Hook discussed the school's operation. Director of Training Katryn Robinson, apprentice instructors Anne Mercer and Jill Browning and Director of Canine Management Mindy Romero discussed staffing, current and future class expectations, raising and or obtaining suitable guide dogs. The 12 month school report follows:

The school graduated 15 guide dog teams (4 classes of 3 students and 3 in-home trainings); was accepted as a member by the International Guide Dog Foundation, [more]; Maintained 12 full time employees who were supported by 75 volunteer puppy raisers and 20 office and event volunteers; substantially reduced their short term debt; raised enough funds to reserve 6 months operating capital; Initiated an estates and wills campaign; and Diversified fund raising events. Buildings and grounds appeared well kept and clean. Files of students and dogs issued to students were reviewed. Hence GDDI, found to be in compliance with specified statutes and regulation, passed their annual inspection.

2. Strategic Plan: The Executive Officer suggested that the Board review the Strategic Plan at each meeting, select one item, and move forward on it. Judy Karau volunteered to take on the responsibility of website enrichment.

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Other discussion included the history of licensing fee increases, whether or not unlicensed instructors are working illegally in California, the average cost of a board meeting compared to teleconference committee meetings, how teleconference meetings are handled to meet legal requirements of the Open Meeting act. Tom Scott requested that a financial report be made at each meeting. In addition, Jane Brackman suggested that a quarterly report be sent to the Board that synthesizes administrative business.

#### OPEN FORUM

Nanette Madsen, Deputy Director of External Affairs, reported that in a DCA phone survey, on-going since October 2005 and soon to be published. The Guide Dog Board ranked very well in consumer service satisfaction.

The Board broke at 1:50 PM and reconvened at 3:30 PM in a closed session for Oral Exams. The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

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